

on his undoubted privilege. No one, he said, should have anything to do with the watch except his own men. It is hard to say whether it was known, at the time when Sybyle seized the bridge, that he would play into the hands of the rebels. It is not unlikely that Walworth suspected him from the first, but did not dare to interpose for fear of the lower classes. The opening of the bridge was afterwards attributed to popular feeling, in which Sybyle's real strength lay far more than in his official right to guard the bridge. Once in possession, he did not long conceal his friendliness towards the peasants, and made it clear to the city authorities that he would soon let down the drawbridge, whether they consented or not. Determining to make the best of a bad situation, the Mayor came to terms with Wat Tyler. He gave leave of entry to the rebels on condition that they would pay for everything they took, and do no damage to the city. The same day, and perhaps about the same hour, that the Kentish rebels came pouring over London Bridge, a friend on the north side of the river opened Aldgate to the men of Essex. Walworth had closed it against them the day before, and it was no¹tf unbarred in spite of his orders.¹ e They entered in troops oi one or two hundred,' says Froissart, * by twenties or thirties, according to the populousness of the towns they came from, and as they came into London they lodged themselves.' The supplies of the city were put at their service. Friend and foe alike, for fear or favour, made them welcome. Great merchants broached the Burgundy in their cellars for throats accustomed to the upland ale of the village breweries.² Hobb and Straw, Piers and Gamelyn, stared at sights which neither they nor their fathers nor grandfathers before them had beheld, the mighty city of red-tiled roofs, the endless labyrinths of narrow lanes and winding alleys, the innumerable churches, the wharves where strange seafaring folk spoke tongues they had never heard and used gestures they had never seen.

During three days, while the mob was in possession of London, fresh detachments came straggling in hour by hour from counties near and far.³ But there were from the

¹ C. R. JR., 488, Bex. vi. (B6v. 190-9) ; Lottie's
London, 197.

* Wals., i. 457 ; Proiss., ii. 468.

« See Ap.